

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 164088

EMBASSY PLEASE PASS TO SCICON

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:TECH, UR

SUBJECT:EXCHANGE OF VISITS ON NUCLEAR SAFETY

REF: A. MOSCOW 5891, B. MOSCOW 9269

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE STATE COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY (SCAE) AND THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND ELECTRIFICATION (MPE), PROPOSE AN EXCHANGE OF VISITS BY TEAMS OF NRC AND USSR SAFETY EXPERTS AS AGREED TO IN YEREVAN DURING THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON COOPERATION IN PEACEFUL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY (JCM) AS OUTLINED BELOW, STARTING WITH VISIT TO USSR, AND REPORT REACTION.
END SUMMARY.
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2. BACKGROUND: THE NRC IS STILL INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITY OF ENTERING INTO AN ARRANGEMENT FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON NUCLEAR SAFETY AND SAFETY RESEARCH WITH THE APPROPRIATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT. THIS WOULD INVOLVE PRIMARILY INFORMATION ON SAFETY OF LAND-BASED CIVILIAN POWER REACTORS. THE COOPERATION PROPOSED BY

NRC WOULD THUS CONCENTRATE ON EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ABOUT OPERATING EXPERIENCE, SAFETY RESEARCH, AND METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF SAFETY ANALYSIS OF NUCLEAR FACILITIES, AS PROPOSED BY NRC, RATHER THAN ON THE SEVERAL TECHNOLOGY

TRANSFER TOPICS IN WHICH THE SOVIETS ARE ALSO INTERESTED.

3. DURING THE DECEMBER 1976 VISIT OF THE US TEAM TO THE USSR TO ATTEND THE FOURTH JCM, MAKSIMOV, DEPUTY MINISTER, MPE, REPEATED HIS EARLIER STATEMENT THAT ALTHOUGH AN EXCHANGE OF VISITS COULD GO AHEAD, NO SAFETY EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENT COULD BE COMPLETED UNTIL THE US AGREED TO RESUME MEETINGS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON US-USSR ENERGY COOPERATION, WHICH HAD BEEN POSTPONED SINCE EARLY 1976. DURING SECRETARY VANCE'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, IT WAS AGREED TO RESUME MEETINGS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON ENERGY COOPERATION, AND THE NEXT MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE IS NOW TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR LATE OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER OF THIS YEAR.

4. ONE OF THE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS IN THE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS ON A NUCLEAR SAFETY EXCHANGE HAS BEEN THE ABSENCE OF A CENTRAL POINT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR NUCLEAR SAFETY IN THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT. MAKSIMOV, WHOSE MINISTRY HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFE OPERATION OF LWR'S, HAS SPOKEN SEVERAL TIMES ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY CO-CONFIDENTIAL

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OPERATION. ALSO, SOVIET ENERGY AGREEMENT SECRETARY MALTSEV RECENTLY STATED SOVIETS ARE EXPECTING US SAFETY DELEGATION VISIT THIS FALL. HOWEVER, BOTH SCAE AND MPE HAVE BEEN MORE INTERESTED IN OBTAINING A TRANSFER OF US LIGHT WATER REACTOR (LWR) TECHNOLOGY THAN IN A SAFETY EXCHANGE, AS SUCH. PUSTINSEV, RECENTLY ASSIGNED TO SCAE, CONFIDED IN DECEMBER THAT, LARGELY BECAUSE OF INTEREST BY SOVIET TRADING PARTNERS, A CENTRAL CONTACT POINT FOR SAFETY MATTERS IS EVOLVING WITHIN THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, AND MIGHT BE OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED DURING 1977. MAKSIMOV HAD AGREED TO ARRANGE VISITS TO SITES OF NRC INTEREST, WITHIN MPE AND OTHER AGENCIES. WE NOTE THAT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ACTIVITIES OF MPE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN TAKEN OVER BY LOPATIN. PUSTINSEV SEEMS TO BE A LOGICAL CONTACT POINT IN SCAE.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD NOW BE TIMELY TO GO AHEAD WITH AN EXCHANGE OF VISITS. WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE, PROPOSING THAT THE US VISIT THE USSR FIRST, WITH A LATER VISIT TO THE US BY THE SOVIETS. AFTER THE EXCHANGE OF VISITS, WE CAN DECIDE WHETHER ASSOCIATION WITH EITHER ENERGY OR ATOMIC ENERGY COOPERATION IS

APPROPRIATE. (END BACKGROUND)

6. EMBASSY REQUESTED TO CALL ON SCAE AND MPE AS SUGGESTED IN REF B. MOSCOW 9269, REMIND THEM OF THE KEY PARTS OF THE PROTOCOL OF FOURTH JCM, AND OF MAKSIMOV'S AND MALTSEV'S OFFERS, PROPOSE THAT THE EXCHANGE OF VISITS BE UNDERTAKEN,

BEGINNING WITH A VISIT BY AN NRC TEAM, AND REPORT RESPONSE. EMBASSY SHOULD EXPLAIN THAT NRC BELIEVES AN EXCHANGE OF SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT GROUND-BASED CIVILIAN WATER-COOLED REACTORS SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN, AND PROPOSES TO VISIT THE USSR SITES LISTED IN PARA. 7 DURING SEPTEMBER OR EARLY OCTOBER 1977, AND TO RECEIVE A SOVIET TEAM LATER AT SIMILAR US SITES, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A BETTER BASIS
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FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS OF THE EXCHANGE. AFTER THE VISITS, THE DETAILED EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENT CAN BE DISCUSSED AT ONE OR BOTH OF THE UPCOMING JOINT COMMITTEE MEETINGS. PLEASE ENDEAVOR TO KEEP BOTH SCAE AND MPE INFORMED.

7. VISIT TO FOLLOWING SITES IN USSR REQUESTED:

A. MOSCOW: SCAE, MPE, GOSGORTEKHNADZOR, MINISTRY OF HEALTH, STATE NUCLEAR INSPECTION AGENCY, AND OTHER AGENCIES, IF NECESSARY, TO DISCUSS SAFETY CONCEPTS AND CRITERIA FOLLOWED IN SOVIET WATER COOLED REACTOR DESIGN, AND TO REVIEW STATUS OF KEY SAFETY-RELEVANT RESEARCH IN PROGRESS IN USSR. INCLUDE VISITS WITH KARELIN, KONKOV, AND AMBRISHUILL, MENTIONED IN MOSCOW 9269, IF YOU BELIEVE APPROPRIATE.

B. VISIT TO SAFETY RESEARCH AT KURCHATOV (CONTACT V. A. SIDORENKO) AND ONE OTHER SITE.

C. ONE LIGHT WATER REACTOR (PWR) SITE, TO DISCUSS DESIGN AND OPERATING EXPERIENCE.

D. THE LENINGRAD PRESSURE TUBE REACTOR, TO DISCUSS DESIGN AND OPERATING EXPERIENCE.

E. A COMPONENT FABRICATION SITE, TO DISCUSS SAFETY INSPECTION PRACTICES AND TECHNIQUES.

8. THE US TEAM WOULD BE COMPOSED OF SEVERAL NRC REPRESENTATIVES, PLUS ONE OR TWO OBSERVERS FROM ERDA AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

9. REFTTEL MENTIONS LOPATIN'S INTEREST IN SEISMIC PROVISIONS OF DESIGN OF LWR'S. DURING HIS VISIT TO USSR IN JUNE, DR. VOLGENAU OF NRC DELIVERED TO MPE SOME DOCUMENTS DESCRIBING APPLICABLE NRC STANDARDS IN THIS AREA. WE WILL SCHEDULE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS AT NRC IN THE WASHINGTON AREA, TO EXPLAIN THIS FURTHER, DURING THE FOLLOW-ON VISIT OF THE
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SOVIET TEAM. ALSO, RECENTLY AT THE SALZBURG CONFERENCE, S. HANAER AND V. STELLO OF NRC MET V. A. SIDORENKO, WHO HAS AN IMPORTANT LWR SAFETY RESEARCH RESPONSIBILITY AT KURCHATOV INSTITUTE, AND WHO IS APPARENTLY ANXIOUS TO ENGAGE IN EXCHANGE OF SAFETY INFORMATION WITH NRC. WE SENT RECENTLY SEVERAL DOCUMENTS TO SIDORENKO IN FOLLOW UP (WITH INFO COPIES TO EMBASSY). YOU SHOULD IMPRESS ON THE SOVIETS THAT WHEREAS THE FULL, 7-ITEM TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE PACKAGE (LISTED AS "TO BE CONSIDERED" IN THE PROTOCOLS OF

THE 1975 MEETINGS OF JOINT COMMITTEE ON PEACEFUL USES COOPERATION) INVOLVES PROPRIETARY INFORMATION AND WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO AGREE ON, A VERY USEFUL RECIPROCAL EXCHANGE OF SAFETY INFORMATION LIKE VOLGENAU WILL PROVIDE AND LIKE STELLO AND HANAUER DISCUSSED IN SALZBURG, COULD BE ARRANGED READILY UNDER THE EXCHANGE THAT HAS BEEN OUTLINED BY NRC FOR SOVIET CONSIDERATION. PLEASE ALSO BE SURE THAT LOPATIN AND SCAE HAVE COPIES OF THE NRC OUTLINE OF A SAFETY ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE US AND USSR, WHICH WE STILL HOPE THE USSR WILL RETURN WITH COMMENTS. VANCE

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